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1 Scotts Rights of God.
2 Millers Fast Sermon. Yellow Jac
3 Dwight on Goodrich.
4 Morses Masonic Sermon.
5 M'Whorters Missionay Sermon.
6 Rodgers on Witherspoon.
7 Pearce at the Ordination of Belcher
Kirkland on Belong
8 Osgood on Prophecies.
9 Trumbulls Ordination Sermon.
10 Emmons's Ordination Sermon.
11 Calvin on James.
12 Stevens Ordination Sermon.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT Salem, IN *NEW-HAMPSHIRE*,

JANUARY 4, 1797,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. John Smith, A. B.

TO THE

WORK OF THE *MINISTRY*,

IN THAT PLACE.

BY Nathaniel Emmons, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRANKLIN,
MASSACHUSETTS.

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M. DCC. XCVII.

AN

ORDINATION SERMON, &c.

EZEKIEL II. 8.

But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house.

THE children of Israel were once holiness to the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase. They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the Elders that outlived Joshua. But ever after that memorable period, they began to lose the spirit of religion, and became more and more corrupt, until they were carried into captivity, as a just punishment for their deep declension. In this deplorable situation, they continued to harden themselves in sin, and to pine away in their iniquities, until every appearance of spiritual life was gone. Then God was pleased to send Ezekiel to prophesy over the valley of dry bones, in order to raise them from spiritual death to spiritual life. And to prepare him for his arduous task, he forewarned him of his danger, and charged him to guard against it. "Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel. Be not afraid of them, though

briars

briars and thorns be with thee, and thou doſt dwell among ſcorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be diſmayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious houſe. And thou ſhalt ſpeak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are *moſt* rebellious. But *thou*, ſon of man, *hear* what I ſay unto thee: Be not *thou* rebellious like *that* rebellious houſe." This was the ſame as to ſay, *I know the degeneracy of the times. I know the corruption and obſtinacy of the people. I know they will ſtop their ears and harden their hearts againſt divine truth. And I know, that for this purpoſe, they will uſe every method, by words and looks, to corrupt your heart, poiſon your ſentiments, and deſtroy your influence. But I warn you to beware of* men; *and never ſuffer yourſelf to be corrupted by thoſe, whom you are ſent to reprove and reform.* This divine caution applies to all who are called to bear the meſſages of God to men; and naturally leads us, on this occaſion, to ſhew,

I. That Miniſters are expoſed to be corrupted by the people: And,

II. That it is their indiſpenſable duty to guard againſt it.

I. Let us conſider, that Miniſters are expoſed to be corrupted by the people.

Though this be a very humiliating truth to Miniſters as well as people, yet let us attend to the evidence

evidence of it, with ſerioufneſs and impartiality. And here I would obſerve,

1. That Miniſters *have been* corrupted by the people. This was the unhappy caſe of Aaron. While Moſes was detained on the Mount, the people were uneaſy, and came to Aaron, and deſired him to make them an idol. Tho' he knew, that he had no right to comply with this unreaſonable requeſt, yet he finally yielded to the importunity of the people, and made them a golden god. Accordingly, when Moſes returned and reproved him for his conduct, he made no other excuſe than the preſſing importunity of the people. "And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou haſt brought ſo great a ſin upon them?" This very queſtion carries an implication, that Aaron was corrupted. "And Aaron ſaid, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knoweſt the people, that they are ſet on miſchief. For they ſaid unto me, Make us gods which ſhall go before us; for as for this Moſes, the man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." This was a baſe inſinuation to the diſhonour of Moſes, and an artful addreſs to the vanity of Aaron, which was exactly ſuited to corrupt his heart, and draw him from the path of duty. The event anſwered the deſire and expectation of thoſe who were ſet on miſchief; for Aaron

was

was corrupted, and became "rebellious like that rebellious houſe." The ſame thing happened to the ſons and ſucceſſors of Aaron; for we find that they were always corrupt, when the people were corrupt. There was a great degeneracy in the time of the Judges, when every man did what was right in his own eyes; and that day of declenſion proved a day of temptation to the Prieſts, who were carried away by the ſtream of corruption.—When Aſa came to the throne, we are told, that "for a long ſeaſon Iſrael had been without the true God, and *without a teaching Prieſt.*" A great number of the Prieſts were actually put down, in the reign of Joſiah, becauſe they had fallen into the degeneracy of the times. And at the reformation, in Hezekiah's day, there was ſuch a ſcarcity of *un*corrupted Prieſts, that the Levites were called in to aſſiſt them in the diſcharge of their office.—Indeed, it was ſo common for the Prieſts to be involved in the corruptions of the people, that God generally reproved them both together. By Jeremiah he ſays, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The Prophets propheſy falſely, and the Prieſts bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it ſo." By the ſame Prophet he ſays again, that he would remove Jeruſalem from before his face, "Becauſe of all the evil of the children of Iſrael, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger,

anger, they, their kings, their princes, and their *Prieſts*." By Ezekiel he ſays of Judea, "Her Prieſts have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have ſhewed difference between the unclean and the clean." By Micah he ſays of the houſe of Iſrael, "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the *Prieſts* thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money." By Zepheniah he ſays of the oppreſſing city, "She obeyed not the voice, ſhe received not correction: ſhe truſted not in the Lord, ſhe drew not near her God: her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are ravening wolves: her Prophets are light and treacherous perſons; her *Prieſts* have polluted the ſanctuary, they have done violence to the law."

Now if the Prieſts were always corrupt *when* the *people* were corrupt, then it is natural to conclude, that they were, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, corrupted by the people. But we are not left to mere conjecture in this caſe; for God himſelf complains of the people for being always diſpoſed to corrupt their teachers. "I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderneſs, to poſſeſs the land of the Amorite. And I raiſed up of your ſons for Prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Iſrael? ſaith the Lord. But ye

gave

gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the Prophets, saying, Prophesy not." They meant to corrupt the friends of virtue, and the Ministers of religion, on purpose to destroy the influence of their example, and the force of their instructions and admonitions: And they very rarely failed of accomplishing their malignant purpose. The experience of ages, therefore, loudly proclaims, that Ministers are exposed to be drawn from their duty, and involved in moral corruption, by the undue influence of the people.

2. The bare example of the people, in a day of declension, has a natural tendency to corrupt Ministers. Moral corruption is contagious, and endangers all who are obliged to come within the sphere of its influence. When the people become cold and dull, and averse from every thing of a religious nature, Ministers are apt to imbibe and manifest the same spirit. When the people become light and vain in their conversation, Ministers are apt to countenance and imitate their levity. When the people grow rich and gay and luxurious, Ministers are apt to fall into the same loose and corrupt habits. When the people indulge themselves in idleness, dissipation, and vain amusements, Ministers are apt to be allured into their company, and become patrons and partakers of their sins. And when the people become loose in their sentiments, and will not endure sound doctrine, Minis-

ters

ters are apt to conceal or pervert the great truths of the gospel, and preach smooth things, to secure the applause and friendship of the enemies of truth. The day of degeneracy is a day of danger to Ministers. The prevailing spirit and practice of the times, naturally tend to cool their zeal, weaken their virtue, and injure both the matter and manner of their preaching. — But though they are exposed to be corrupted by the bare example of the people, yet,

3. They are in much greater danger of being corrupted, by the positive endeavours and exertions of the people to draw them into sin. A corrupt people feel themselves obliged to take this course, in order to resist the energy of plain and faithful preaching. They know the power of divine truth, the force of pious example, and the influence of godly Ministers: and they feel unable to stand before these united means of conviction. To prevent, therefore, the pains of a wounded conscience, they endeavour, by various methods, to bring Ministers over to their own side, and form them agreeably to their own taste. Some treat them with peculiar respect, and flatter their vanity, to make them more yielding and compliant. Some load them with kindness, and endeavour to draw them aside, by the powerful cords of interest. Some invite them to their houses, and into their company, and urge them to small and seemingly harmless

compliances, and so take advantage of their weakness. And some use more harsh and imperious methods, and attempt to *frighten* them from their virtue and integrity.

Such methods as these, we find the children of Israel often employed, to corrupt those who were sent to them as messengers of the Lord of Hosts. Sometimes they attacked their virtue and innocence, "by giving them wine to drink." Sometimes "they said to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Sometimes they threatened their Prophets with the terror of their tongues: "Come, said they, let us devise devices against Jeremiah, and let us smite him with the *tongue*, and let us not give heed to any of his words." Sometimes they employed their *frowning looks* as well as hard words, to deter their teachers from their duty, and make them rebellious like themselves. And sometimes "they commanded their prophets, saying, Prophesy not." This rough method Amaziah used to silence the prophet Amos. "Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: But prophesy not again any more in Beth el: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." And the council at

Jerusalem

Jeruſalem laid the ſame imperious prohibition upon the Apoſtles. After mature deliberation, "they called them in, and *commanded* them not to ſpeak at all nor teach in the name of Jeſus." Jews and Gentiles are the ſame by nature, and therefore our Lord taught his Miniſters to expect the ſame treatment from the Gentiles, which the Prophets had received from the Jews. "Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you." The conduct of both Jews and Gentiles towards the Miniſters of religion, is a demonſtration of the natural diſpoſition of mankind, to uſe every method in their power to corrupt the hearts and deſtroy the influence of thoſe who are ſent to inſtruct and reclaim them.——We are all by this time convinced, I preſume, that Miniſters are expoſed to be corrupted by the people.—But if they are expoſed to this danger, then,

II. It is their indiſpenſable duty to guard againſt it. *Son of man, hear what I ſay unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious houſe.*

It is the dictate of common ſenſe, that every man ought to avoid every danger, which he knows, and which he is able to avoid. Miniſters know the danger of being corrupted; and they are all able to guard againſt it. This appears from the conduct

duct of many, who have gone before them, in delivering the meſſages of God to men. The faithful Prophets and Prieſts, as well as pious Apoſtles, felt their expoſedneſs to the frowns and flatteries of the world; but they nobly reſiſted every effort to allure or to awe them from their duty. The Prophet Samuel, who was early called to deliver the meſſages of God to Iſrael, faithfully diſcharged his office, and maintained his innocence and integrity to the laſt. Though he lived in a day of declenſion, and the people were weary of the divine government; yet he would never yield to their corrupt inclinations, any further than God allowed him to gratify their wiſhes: So that he was able, juſt before his death, to make the moſt ſolemn appeal to their conſciences, that he had walked uprightly before them all the days of his life. Elijah ſingly and nobly reſiſted the frowns of the people, the reproach of the Prophets, and the wrath of the king. Jeremiah was ſurrounded by enemies, who threatened to defame his character, and to deſtroy his life, unleſs he would forbear to reprove them for their ſins, and admoniſh them of their danger: But he bravely deſpiſed their threats, and faithfully diſcharged his duty. And the primitive Preachers of the goſpel diſplayed no leſs magnanimity and firmneſs, in the courſe of their miniſtry. When Peter and John were *commanded*

not

not to preach in the name of Jeſus, by the moſt dignified character in the Jewiſh nation, they boldly replied, "Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard." But Paul met with the moſt oppoſition; and accordingly manifeſted the moſt chriſtian fortitude and fidelity in preaching the goſpel. "Do I," ſays he to the Galatians, "Do I now perſuade men, or God? Or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? For if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt." He aſſures the Theſſalonians, that he had made it his maxim as a Miniſter, to pleaſe God rather than men. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing men, but God which trieth our hearts." The conduct of theſe faithful ſervants of God, gives us clear and ſtriking evidence, that Miniſters are *able*, and therefore *ought*, to guard againſt all the peculiar dangers of their office. And to impreſs this plain and practical duty the more deeply on our minds, I would obſerve,

1. That God has expreſsly commanded Miniſters, to guard againſt the attempts of thoſe who would corrupt their hearts, and draw them aſide from the path of duty. His command to Ezekiel on this ſubject, is extremely pointed and ſolemn:

"Son

"Son of man, I ſend thee to the children of Iſrael. Be not afraid of them, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou doſt dwell among ſcorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be diſmayed at their looks, though they be a *rebellious* houſe. And thou ſhalt ſpeak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are *moſt rebellious*. But *thou*, ſon of man, hear what I ſay unto thee: Be not *thou* rebellious like that rebellious houſe."—Very ſimilar to this, is the command which Chriſt gave to his Apoſtles, and to all their ſucceſſors in the miniſtry. "Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves. *Beware of men.*"—Theſe commands from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, bind all the Miniſters of the goſpel to guard againſt the peculiar dangers of their ſacred office, and to repel every temptation to unfaithfulneſs. It is their indiſpenſable duty, therefore, to view mankind in the light in which the great Searcher of hearts has repreſented them, and to be as careful to avoid their corrupting influence, as they would be to avoid the jaws of a wolf, or the poiſon of a ſcorpion.

2. They will forfeit the divine preſence and protection, if they ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted; and therefore it is their indiſpenſable duty to guard

guard againſt it. While they continue faithful to God, and plainly deliver his meſſages to men, he has graciouſly promiſed to be with them, and to preſerve them from the power of their enemies.—Upon this condition, he promiſed to ſtrengthen and ſupport his prophet Ezekiel. "Son of man, go, get thee unto the houſe of Iſrael, and ſpeak with *my words* unto them. Behold, I have made thy face ſtrong againſt their faces, and thy forehead ſtrong againſt their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint, have I made thy forehead: fear them nor, neither be diſmayed at their looks, tho' they be a rebellious houſe."—The ſame promiſe of ſupport he gave to Jeremiah, on the ſame condition. "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee, to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord. Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls againſt the whole land, againſt the kings of Judah, againſt the princes thereof, againſt the *Prieſts* thereof, and againſt the *people* of the land. And they ſhall fight againſt thee; but they ſhall not prevail againſt thee: for I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to deliver thee."—Chriſt alſo graciouſly promiſes to be with his Miniſters, ſo long as they ſtrictly adhere to his precepts and appointments. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I

have

have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always."——These gracious promises are all *conditional*, and are so explained by God himself. He says to Jeremiah, "Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them ALL that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces; lest *I confound thee before them.*" And this awful threatening, God tells the corrupt Priests in the days of Malachi, he had actually executed upon them. "Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept *my ways*, but have been partial in the law."——Now, Ministers have *great* reason to desire the divine presence and protection; for if God be with them, who can be against them? And they have *as much* reason to fear his departure and displeasure; for if *God* be *against* them, *who* can be *for* them? This serious and weighty consideration ought to make them extremely careful, to regard *God* more than *men*; and never incur *his* displeasure, in order to gain the favour, or to avoid the frowns, of their fellow worms.

3. If Ministers suffer themselves to be corrupted by the people, it destroys their usefulness. If they imbibe the spirit of the people, and feel as they feel; if they follow the example of the people, and conduct as they conduct; or if they condescend to preach smooth things to please the people;

people; they will totally deſtroy their miniſterial uſefulneſs: For, as ſoon as the people perceive, that they regard *them* more than *God*, and will proſtitute their conſciences to gratify their unreaſonable deſires, they will deſpiſe their perſons, and neglect their preaching. Time-ſerving Miniſters generally have but few hearers. All men, whether good or bad, inwardly deſpiſe looſe and unprincipled Miniſters, let their talents be what they may. And the ſame degree of criminality, which would be ſcarcely obſervable in other men, is ſufficient to deſtroy the character and uſefulneſs of thoſe who ſuſtain the ſacred office of the Miniſtry. No men are ſo completely uſeleſs and contemptible, as thoſe Miniſters who have loſt all appearance of religion, and become viſibly conformed to the ſpirit and manners of the world. For, as our Saviour ſays, "They are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavor, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Hence the dignity of their character, and the importance of their office, lay Miniſters of the goſpel under ſolemn obligation to keep themſelves unſpotted from the world, and to preach the preaching which God bids them, whether their people will hear, or whether they will forbear.

I muſt obſerve once more,

4. If Miniſters ſuffer themſelves to be carried down the ſtream of corruption, they become not only *uſeleſs*, but *deſtructive* to the people. Corrupt Miniſters are always corrupters. The whole tendency of their practice and preaching is, to corrupt and deſtroy the ſouls of their people. Tho' they have loſt the power of doing good, yet they retain the power of doing evil. They can do more than other men, to pull down the kingdom of Chriſt, and build up the kingdom of ſatan. And as they are more capable, ſo they are more diſpoſed, than other men, to ſtifle the ſpirit of Religion, oppoſe the doctrines of the goſpel, and ſtrengthen the hearts and hands of the wicked. This is the character which God gives of the corrupt teachers in Iſrael. He ſays, "Shemaiah taught rebellion againſt the Lord." He ſays, the prophets of Samaria and Jeruſalem "made Iſrael to *err*, ſtrengthened the hands of *evil doers*, and *cauſed profaneneſs to go forth into all the land.*"——When the people have formed their Miniſters after their own hearts, and made them rebellious like themſelves, their Miniſters will then fit them faſt for deſtruction. So God declares to Iſrael, by his faithful prophet Hoſea: "There ſhall be like people, like Prieſt: and I will *puniſh* them for their ways." And our Lord ſays, "If the blind lead the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch." Thus Miniſters will deſtroy both their

own

own ſouls and the ſouls of their people, if they ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted by them. And can there be a more ſolemn and awful conſideration than this, to conſtrain them to abſtain from all appearance of evil; to guard againſt all the dangers of their office; and to diſcharge all the important duties of it, with fidelity and zeal! This is our indiſpenſable and infinitely important duty.

Having illuſtrated the danger and duty of Miniſters, I now proceed to make a few

REFLECTIONS,

which naturally grow out of the ſubject.

1. IT is now a very dangerous day to Miniſters, in this young and flouriſhing Republic.—— The people have fallen into a great and general declenſion. As they have increaſed, ſo they have ſinned. They have loſt their original piety and virtue, and become extremely looſe both in practice and in principle. Every ſpecies of moral corruption has ſpread through every part of our nation, and ſeized all ranks and claſſes of men. Arminianiſm, univerſaliſm, and deiſm, have more or leſs infected all our towns and pariſhes; and led multitudes to renounce thoſe duties and doctrines of religion, in which they were early educated by their pious parents and faithful Miniſters. This day of declenſion among the people, is a day of

great

great danger to the Preachers of the gospel. While iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold, even the most faithful Ministers of the gospel are in danger of falling into the degeneracy of the times. This is very evident from what has been said; and still more evident from the conduct of those who sustain the sacred character. Many Ministers have already begun to degenerate with a degenerate people. Some have lost that spirit of devotion, that strictness of life, and that purity of sentiment, which was once so conspicuous in the Preachers of the gospel. And some have begun to yield to the corrupt humours and unreasonable desires of the people, in points of serious and weighty importance. Some yield to the *vicious*; and neglect to condemn and reprove their fashionable vices. Some yield to the *heterodox*; and neglect to condemn and expose their corrupt sentiments. Some yield to moral sinners; and neglect to preach those doctrines of the gospel, which are so disagreeable to their carnal hearts. And some condescend even to dispense with the laws of Christ, and admit those to enjoy the ordinances of the gospel, who are visibly destitute of the scriptural qualifications.—— These are striking instances of Ministers yielding to the corruptions of the times, contrary to the dictates of their minds. And such instances as these are very numerous, and to be found all over

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the land. How many Miniſters neither preach nor practiſe according to their own ſentiments, through fear of offending, and through deſire of pleaſing, the people? This conduct weakens the hands of faithful Miniſters, and ſtrengthens the hands of thoſe who wiſh to corrupt them. The preſent proſpect is, that thoſe who are the light of the world, will loſe their luſtre; and thoſe who are the ſalt of the earth, will loſe their ſavor; and there will be like people, like Prieſt.——Trying times for Miniſters are probably coming. And let us all, who think we ſtand, take heed leſt we fall.

2. Miniſters need, at this day, to be well qualified for their office.——Though religion has decayed, yet knowledge has increaſed. There are men of letters, or at leaſt men of information, in every religious ſociety. The people in general are much more capable now, than they were formerly, of judging of the talents and qualifications of Miniſters. And as they are more critical in diſcerning, ſo they are more ſevere in cenſuring, every miniſterial defect or imperfection. The corruption of the times appears in nothing more viſibly, than in the united oppoſition of the people to *ſacred* things, and to *ſacred* perſons. They ſeem determined to bring down Miniſters, and make repriſals upon them, for their having ſo long poſſeſſed the public eſteem and confidence. Thoſe, therefore, who enter

ter into the Miniſtry at ſuch a day as this, need to be well qualified for their great and arduous work. If they aſſume the ſacred office, without any conſiſtent ſcheme of religious ſentiments, or any conſiderable ſtock of theological knowledge, they will very probably injure the cauſe which they ought to defend and promote. For people have loſt their former implicit faith in the opinions of Miniſters, and pay no reſpect to their bare aſſertions. They demand evidence for every thing which their teachers call upon them to believe and practiſe. And this renders it neceſſary for Miniſters to be mighty in the Scriptures, and expert in reaſoning upon divine ſubjects. They ought to be able to meet deiſts, univerſaliſts, and all gainſayers, upon their own ground, and expoſe the fallacy and weakneſs of their boaſted arguments. There is reaſon to believe, that the late rapid increaſe of error and infidelity in this land, is partly owing to the ignorance of Miniſters, who have never formed any clear and conſiſtent ſcheme of Divinity in their own minds. They have ſuffered error and infidelity to take root in their own congregations, through a ſenſe of their own inſufficiency to maintain and defend the truth. And this has led infidels and others, to repreſent the Clergy as a weak, ignorant, ſuperſtitious ſet of men. Hence it highly concerns the Miniſters of the goſpel, at this day, to wipe off ſuch aſperſions from their order, by poſſeſſing

and

and displaying that knowledge, which may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. It is presumption for any man, to undertake to preach the gospel, without being able to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, and to defend the important doctrines which the Bible contains. This is what people now justly expect; and if they are disappointed, it will injure both them and those who profess to be their religious instructors.

But *prudence*, as well as knowledge, is a necessary qualification for a Minister. He needs this, to enable him to exhibit divine truth in the most profitable manner, and to escape those snares which the enemies of truth will always endeavour to lay for him. Our Lord was a *prudent* Preacher. His prudence, however, did not consist in taking the safest methods to conceal disagreeable doctrines; but in delivering disagreeable doctrines at a proper time, and in proper expressions. How often did his enemies attempt to entangle him in his talk? And how often did he confound and silence them? There are many, at this day, who feel the same opposition to the Ministers of the gospel, that the Jews felt towards Christ; and therefore they need to be wise and prudent, as he was, in order to avoid the same snares and dangers, which he, by his prudence, avoided. Accordingly he has expressly enjoined it upon them, "to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

But Miniſters of the goſpel, at this day of declenſion, need large meaſures of Grace, as well as of knowledge and prudence. They need to be crucified to the world, and the world to them, by the croſs of Chriſt. They ought to be willing to take up their croſs daily, and endure the afflictions of the goſpel. They ought to ſeek the honour which cometh from God, and renounce that which cometh from men. They ought to favor the things which be of God, and not thoſe which be of men. They ought to love God, and Chriſt, and the ſouls of men, ſo much, as to be willing to be poor, and deſpiſed, and abuſed by men, in the faithful diſcharge of their duty. They ought, in a word, to be ſo holy, and harmleſs, and pure, and heavenly minded, as to be proof againſt all the frowns and flatteries of thoſe who wiſh to weaken their hands, diſcourage their hearts, and deſtroy their influence. If thoſe who enter upon the Miniſtry are poſſeſſed of theſe ſuperior qualifications, they may hope, through the divine goodneſs, to war a good warfare, to keep the faith, and endure unto the end, ſo as to receive that crown of righteouſneſs which is reſerved for thoſe who are faithful unto death. But if any preſume to run before they are ſent, and to preach before they are qualified, they have reaſon to expect that they ſhall one day fall into the corruption of the times, and become a reproach to the ſacred order, and a ſtumbling to thoſe whom they ought to have reproved and reclaimed.

3. It is the duty of all good men, at this day eſpecially, to aid and aſſiſt the Miniſters of the goſpel in the diſcharge of their office. No men have greater difficulties to encounter, than Miniſters, and therefore no men ſtand in more need of aſſiſtance, than they. They are pleading the cauſe of all good men, againſt the united oppoſition of all bad men. Good men, therefore, ought to do all in their power to countenance and aſſiſt them. And in compaſſion to Miniſters, God has been pleaſed to lay his ſpecial commands upon all good men to help them. The duties which good men owe to Miniſters, are plainly pointed out, and ſtrongly enjoined, in the word of God. I will read a number of plain paſſages to this purpoſe. "The Prieſt's lips ſhould keep knowledge, and *they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth:* for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account." "We beſeech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you; and *eſteem* them very highly in love for their work ſake." "Remember them that have the rule over you; who have ſpoken unto you the word of God; whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation." "Brethren, pray for us." "Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's

ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that believe not." "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified; and *that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men.*"—Theſe precepts require good men, in particular, to *hear* their Miniſters, to *revere* their Miniſters, to *eſteem* their Miniſters, and to *pray* for their Miniſters. It is high time, for all real chriſtians, to awake from their ſtupor, and by their prayers and exertions, to aid the Miniſters of the goſpel in their difficult and important work. If chriſtian profeſſors would unite with chriſtian Miniſters, in the common cauſe of chriſtianity, we might reaſonably hope that religion would gain ground, and vice and infidelity would every where fall before it.

But it is time to conclude the Diſcourſe, with ſuch Addreſſes as are uſual on ſuch an occaſion as this. And, in the firſt place, I turn to him, who is about to take the Paſtoral care of this people.

Dear Sir,

YOU are entering upon a work of great difficulty and danger. You will fare better than any who have gone before you in the Miniſtry, if you ſhould not meet with any who wiſh and endeavour to draw you from the path of duty. The people,

to

to whom you are going to minister, we presume are as well disposed towards the gospel, and towards the Preachers of it, as religious societies in general. But the corruptions of the times have reached this as well as other places. You are, therefore, entering upon the work of the Ministry at a very dangerous period. And though we hope you are really friendly to God and to his cause, yet the seeds of rebellion are not entirely destroyed in your own heart. There is something still within you, which exposes you to be moved from your stedfastness. Moral corruption spreads its poison very insensibly, and often gains the possession of the heart before the man is aware. You cannot, therefore, be too watchful against its pernicious influence. To defeat the designs of those, who may wish to weaken your hands and heart in the cause of God, you cannot take a more direct and effectual method, than to become "*an Ensample to the flock.*" It is the proper business of Ministers to *set*, and not to *follow*, example. Instead of suffering yourself to be formed to the spirit and manners of others, make it your constant aim and endeavour to form others to the spirit of the gospel and the life of religion. If your people perceive this to be your steady and governing principle of action, they will have but little *hope*, and of consequence but little *courage*, to make the attempt of corrupting either your heart, your life, or your preaching. If

you

you appear to regard God more than man, and the good of your people more than their cenſure or applauſe, they will feel a power in your preaching, and a force in your example, which they can neither gainſay nor reſiſt; eſpecially if you diſcover, at the ſame time, a readineſs to pleaſe, and even to oblige them, in all things which are conſiſtent with the duties of your office. Conſcience is always on the ſide of the faithful Miniſter, and againſt every rebellious child of Adam: And it is this, which gives every Miniſter, who ſpeaks for God, and with his words, the aſcendency over the moſt hardened and obſtinate ſinners. Only fear God, and make his word the ſtandard of your preaching, and you need not fear to deliver the moſt diſagreeable truths to your people, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they will feel that there is a man of God among them.

A good ſoldier eſteems it an honour to be called to the poſt of danger. And if you are a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, you will eſteem it an honour to plead his cauſe in a day of declenſion. It is a cauſe which will certainly prevail ſomewhere; and if you do your duty, you may humbly hope that it will prevail in this place. But, ſhould you be ſo unhappy as to find religion decaying among your own people, and among thoſe around you; let it not damp your ſpirit, but awaken you to be

more

more fervent in your devotions, more indefatigable in your ſtudies, more zealous in your preaching, and more holy and exemplary in your living. The united exertions of the enemies of religion, ought to rouſe the united exertions of thoſe who are ſet for the defence of the goſpel, to put a check upon the growing ſpirit of error and irreligion: and we hope you will not be wanting, in your deſires and endeavours, to awaken ſtupid ſinners to a ſenſe of their danger and duty.

There can be no neuters in the cauſe of Chriſt. He that is not *for* him, muſt be *againſt* him; and he that gathereth not with him, muſt ſcatter abroad. You muſt be conformed either to Chriſt or to the world. You muſt either preach rebellion againſt God, or bear your public teſtimony againſt it, both in preaching and in practice. On this day, of your ſolemn conſecration to the ſacred office, you are ſolemnly called upon to chooſe whom you will ſerve, whether Chriſt or his enemies. Be entreated to make a wiſe choice, and never depart from it, becauſe the conſequences will be infinitely important. So our Lord hath taught you, in the moſt ſtriking language: "Who then (ſays he) is a faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſehold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. Verily

ly I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Son of man, *hear* what your Lord saith unto you, and be not thou rebellious, like such a rebellious servant: but be thou faithful unto death, and the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you a crown of life, which shall never fade away.

The Church and Congregation in this place, will now indulge me in a free and friendly Address to them, on this solemn occasion.

Brethren and Friends,

BEHOLD the man, whom you have so unanimously chosen to take the Pastoral care of your souls. Receive him as a messenger of the Lord of Hosts, and seek the law at his mouth. Esteem him highly in love for his work sake. Consider him as a Minister as well as a man, and pay respect to the Minister in the man. Cease not to pray for him, and to join with him in building up the Redeem-

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er's kingdom. In this, and in this alone, you may reasonably desire him to be one with you: And in this, and in this alone, will he be willing to join with you, if he is a faithful servant of God. Never desire him to regard you more than God; and never become his enemies because he tells you the truth. This will be distressing to him, and destructive to yourselves. He cannot serve you any longer than he serves God. If you should be so unwise as to desire him to conform to your unreasonable wishes, and so successful as to bring him to a conformity, you will injure both him and yourselves. It appears from what has been said, however, that the people are extremely prone to corrupt their Ministers: And this affords ground to fear, that this people, who have been so remarkably unanimous in the choice of him, who is now to be set over them in the Lord, may nevertheless become disposed to weaken his hands and discourage his heart, in the service of their souls. Should you endeavour to do this, and succeed in it, how dreadful will be your situation, when you come to see, at the last day, that you have grieved the heart and destroyed the influence of one, who desired, and endeavoured to promote, your eternal good! —But, on the other hand, what can afford you greater joy, than to be presented before the universe, as friends to God, and to them who were workers together with him in building up his kingdom?

kingdom?—You and your Paſtor are both in danger. He is in danger from you, and you are in danger from him. The connection which may be this day formed between you, will be infinitely intereſting to you all. We beſeech you, Brethren and Friends, to take heed how you *bear* your Miniſter, how you *feel* towards him, and how you *treat* him. He can do but very little without you. He needs your love, your prayers, and your aſſiſtance. He is called, like young Samuel, to bear the meſſages of God to you, in a day of great declenſion. And if it be his heart's deſire and prayer to God, that you may be ſaved; let it be your heart's deſire and prayer to God, that he may be both faithful and ſucceſsful. And if you receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, you ſhall receive a prophet's reward.

AMEN.

THE *CHARGE.*

BY THE REV. Gyles Merrill, MINISTER OF *PLAISTOW* AND PART OF *HAVERHILL.*

GIVING the ſolemn Charge at our Ordinations of Miniſters, as it is a practice warranted by apoſtolic example, ſo it well accords with our natural ſentiments and feelings on ſuch an occaſion, as it, at once, preſents to the candidate a ſummary of the duties he is to perform, and of the reaſons inducing to wiſdom, zeal and fidelity in the performance.

This being the part of the public tranſactions of this day, aſſigned me by the ordaining Council, requeſting the ſilent, candid and ſerious attention of the whole, I turn to the perſon here preſenting himſelf before the Lord, and before his people, and by the divinely inſtituted and expreſſive rite of the impoſition of hands, we, in the name, and by the authority of Jeſus Chriſt, do ſeparate and ordain you, Mr. *JOHN SMITH*, to the office and work of the Goſpel Miniſtry: And as you are called of God, in the courſe of his providence, to the ſtated exerciſe of the Miniſtry in this place, we therefore commit unto you the Paſtoral care and overſight of this Church and Congregation, in *Salem*; at the

ſame time declaring you to be inveſted with all the powers and privileges of the Evangelical Miniſtry, and under obligation the moſt ſacred and indiſpenſable, to preach the Word—to adminiſter the Ordinances of the Goſpel—to rule the houſe of God—to pronounce his bleſſing on his people—and to aſſiſt, on proper occaſions, in ordaining others to the ſame important work and office.

Take thou, then, upon thee, this Miniſtry, and the overſight of this flock, with pure intentions, with a ready mind, and with inflexible purpoſes, through grace, of fulfilling the duties of your ſtation with diligence and fidelity.

In order to this, look well to yourſelf, to your heart and to your life, to the views of your mind, to the exerciſes of your heart, to the general tenor and to the particular ſteps of your walk. The good Miniſter implies the good man, and perſonal religion forms a diſtinguiſhing trait in the character of a Paſtor according to God's own heart.

It is our preſumption and our hope, that you have received an unction from the Holy One. Be ſolicitous, Sir, to drink deep into the ſpirit of the goſpel, to feel and expreſs its energy and its graces, to exemplify all the virtues of that religion which you are to recommend to others, and to be yourſelf a model of that amiable character and life, to

which

which it is the design of christianity to form those to whom you minister.

As a stated part of your duty, you are to *preach the Word.* And we give it you in charge to take heed, both as to the *matter* and the *manner* of your preaching. The Bible is to be your rule. The sacred Scriptures must be the standard of your faith, of your life, of your preaching, and of all your administrations; these must, therefore, be the subject of your daily, serious, prayerful and impartial study. In your examination of the Scriptures, you are to compare *spiritual things with spiritual*, and conceive of each part according to the *analogy of faith*, and the scope of the whole; not distinguishing things between which there is no difference, nor blending together things which are in themselves distinct.

The Christian system, you will understand and represent as a religion of divine original, sufficiently authenticated to gain rational belief; a device of unsearchable wisdom and benevolence, intended and adapted to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the guilty, to form mankind to knowledge, piety, social virtue, usefulness and happiness; a religion which, in its structure, is most admirably fitted to display the riches of free grace, while it establishes the necessity of godliness and sound morality.

This

This religion is to be the *ſubject matter* of your preaching; and the doctrines, the precepts, the prohibitions, the inſtitutions, the promiſes, the threatnings, and the examples of it, particularly that of Chriſt, are to be clearly opened, diſcreetly applied, faithfully repreſented, and ſtrongly enforced; that, through the concurring grace of the Spirit of God, of which the Goſpel is a miniſtration, they may hopefully operate for the inſtruction, conviction and converſion of ſinners, as well as for the edification, comfort and improvement of the ſanctified. You are to avoid curious queſtions and ſtrifes of words, as tending to ſubvert and confound your hearers; and to preach Chriſt crucified; faith in him, and repentance towards God; that love which originates from faith, and which is the fulfilling of the law; together with that *holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Theſe things teach and exhort.

In regard to the *manner* of your preaching, let it be in a mode correſponding with the nature of your ſubject; grave, ſerious, plain, ſolemn and animated, pertinent to the ſeveral ages, claſſes and caſes of thoſe whom you addreſs. In this way, *feed the flock, the ſheep* and *the lambs*, endeavouring *to approve yourſelf unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one his* particular *portion of meat in due ſeaſon.*

But,

But, Sir, you must know, that the desk is not the only theatre on which you are to exert your ministerial talents; nor is preaching there, your only employment. Your whole turn of mind, your temper and spirit, your general conversation, your occasional visits and intercourses with your people, and the habitual course of your life and complection of your example, must be a lively comment on your preaching, and a splendid exemplification of christian graces and ministerial abilities.

You are now invested with authority to administer the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: This must be done with *impartiality*, to the proper subjects, as stated in the gospel, making a judicious difference between *the holy and profane*.

You are not only to feed, but to rule the flock: Let this part of your duty be performed, not *as lording it over God's heritage*, but in a manner that may combine meekness, moderation and faithfulness, with dignity, wisdom and impartiality.—Strain not the cords of church-discipline till they break, nor relax them to countenance scandal and disorder.

The gift that is in you, by laying on the hands of the Presbytery, is not to be neglected, as it respects the ordination of others. You must act here with great caution and discretion. *Lay hands sud-*

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denly on no man, leſt you be partaker of other men's ſins; but the things which thou haſt received, before many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able alſo to teach others.

Your candle muſt not be put under a buſhel, but in a candleſtick, *holding forth the word of life:* There you muſt burn and ſhine, till you *ſpend and are ſpent.* You muſt cultivate a ſpirit of fortitude, and *endure hardineſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt:* Undiſmayed with difficulties, unallured by enticements, let your *patience have its perfect work, and be thou faithful unto death.*

Although your own flock claims your more particular and ſtated miniſtrations, yet to them they are not to be wholly confined. Let your talents and benevolence be exerted for the general good of the Churches; to eſtabliſh or reſtore truth and love; to heal their diviſions; to ſtrengthen the hands, encourage the hearts, and promote the reputation and uſefulneſs of their Paſtors, joining your efforts and prayers with theirs, that *peace may be within the walls, and proſperity within the palaces of* our *Jeruſalem.*

There is one thing more too important to be omitted in an addreſs of this nature—It is this, that *all your ſufficiency is of God,* and that the efficacy of all your moſt vigorous adminiſtrations depends on his

his bleſſing; be then, O man of God, a man of prayer. To the God of all grace let humble, ardent and frequent application be made for wiſdom, light, ſtrength, animation and fortitude, to aid you in your work, and for the energy of his Spirit to give impreſſion and efficacy to your adminiſtrations.

Theſe things we give you in charge, before God, Angels, and this whole aſſembly. Motives to keep it, unrebukable, are not wanting; motives both awful and alluring.——We affectionately exhort you, by your explicit profeſſion of the chriſtian religion which you are to preach; by the vows implied in your Ordination; by your accountableneſs to the tribunal of Heaven; by the doom of the ſlothful ſervant; by the blood of ſouls that will be found in the ſkirts, and required at the hands, of the unfaithful; by the pleaſures of a good conſcience; by the approbation of God; by the crown of glory that fadeth not away; by every thing that is intereſting and important, in time or eternity, to yourſelf or to your flock—we entreat and adjure you to *take heed to yourſelf*, and to *the miniſtry you have received in the Lord to fulfil it:* And may God Almighty bleſs you—render you a rich and laſting bleſſing—and grant that, having *turned many to righteouſneſs, you may ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as a ſtar for ever and ever.*

AMEN.

THE

RIGHT HAND OF *FELLOWSHIP.*

BY THE REV. MR. Peabody, OF ATKINSON.

THE great Apoſtle of the Gentiles, when taking a comparative view of *faith, hope, and charity*, evidently gives a preference to the latter.

Correſpondent to this idea, is the principal ſcope of revelation, by which true chriſtianity is clearly diſcovered to be a ſyſtem of genuine benevolence, calculated to promote the greateſt harmony in ſociety, and the beſt intereſt of the Redeemer's kingdom among men.

This divine love meliorates the heart, rectifies human paſſions, dilates the mind, increaſes humility, directs the affections to proper objects, and gives the finiſhing ſtrokes to a character, amiable in the ſight of God and man.

By this heavenly affection, cenſorious bigotry retires, and true virtue and goodneſs are cheerfully embraced wherever they are diſcovered.

A trait ſo ornamental in the characters of individuals, ſhines with diſtinguiſhed luſtre, when conſpicuous in *ſocieties* who are connected together for the promotion of mutual happineſs; and it deſerves an additional encomium, being particularly enforced

enforced in thoſe *ſacred Oracles which were given by inſpiration of* God, *and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that the man of* God *may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.*

Love to the brethren, is the principal criterion, by which we are aſſured, that we are the true diſciples of Chriſt. It is eſſential in an Ambaſſador of the Saviour of men; it is eſſential in ſiſter Churches, to be exhibited upon all proper occaſions, eſpecially upon our Ordination ſolemnities.

This brotherly affection glowed in the character of the Apoſtles of our Lord. Upon their commiſſioning and ſending forth others to be their fellow labourers, they diſcovered their cordial approbation of them, and their reſolution in the cauſe of the goſpel, by giving them the *Right Hand of* Fellowſhip.

In imitation of this example, this ſignificant rite has been in general uſe among chriſtians, in ſucceſſive periods, to the day in which we live.

The preſent ſolemn and joyful occaſion preſents us with an opportunity to exhibit our affection and eſteem in goſpel order, to you, *dear Sir*, unto whom, by the direction of this venerable Council, I give my right hand.——You will receive it as a token of our cordial approbation of you, as a faith-

ful servant of the Great Head of the Church, and one with us in the office of the gospel ministry.

We welcome you, my brother, into the gospel vineyard, to take a part with us in sowing, planting, and watering, with an humble reliance upon God for an ample increase. We publicly propose an interchange of kind offices, that we may be fellow helpers to each other in the Lord. We wish you a happy and successful ministry, with a united, liberal, and virtuous people. Rejoicing with you in your present prospects, we commend you to the care and direction of Him, who holds the stars in his right hand, walks in the midst of his golden candlesticks, and who has promised to accompany his faithful ministering servants to the end of the world.

May you have the exalted happiness of promoting union and harmony among this people; of being instrumental in the hand of God, in reclaiming the erroneous, awakening the careless, and in serving the best interest of this Church and people, that you may "*save yourself, and those who hear you.*" May you closely follow the example of Christ, in his imitable perfections, exhibiting much of his spirit in your daily walk and conversation, that you may be an example to your flock. And you will not fail to take God's word for the rule of your faith and practice, to exhibit that disposition

which

which characterizes the true follower of the Lamb of God, of that open, benevolent temper, which has ever appeared conspicuous in your predecessor among this people, who is now in the evening of life.

A genuine principle, spontaneously producing the fruits of righteousness, will give you favour in the sight of God and man, and a title, through the Redeemer, to a blessed future inheritance.

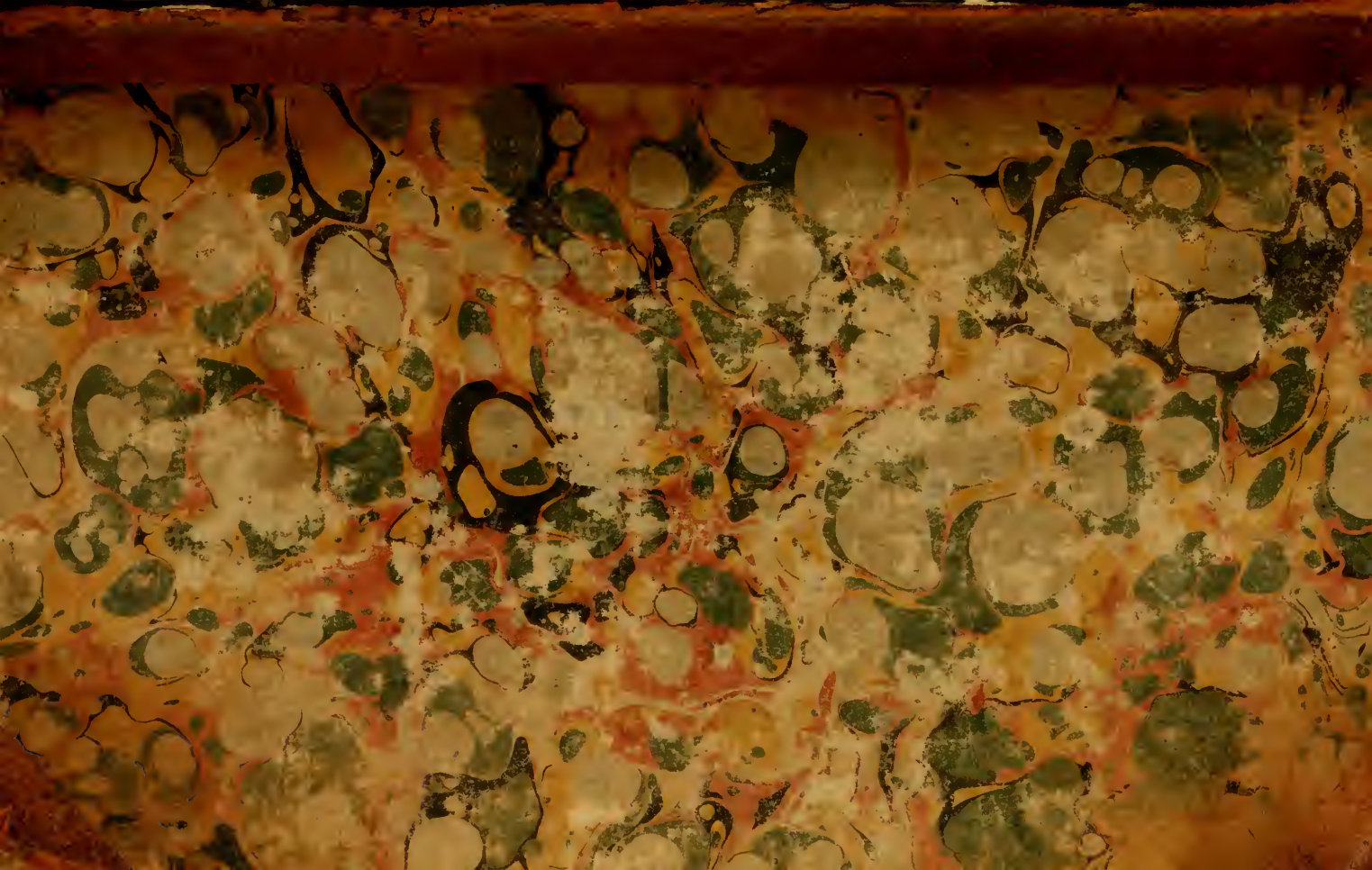
Go forth then under the cheering influences of the *Sun of Righteousness*, under the protection *of the great Shepherd*; trust in him, and he will be your shield, and *exceeding great reward.*

And now, my brethren and friends of this Christian Church and Society, we sincerely congratulate you upon the present joyful and interesting occasion; when God in his providence, by the infirmities of age, has caused your venerable Pastor to retire from his public labours, cordially to join with you in a re-settlement; that you have been, with so much unanimity, directed to the choice of one, in whose fidelity we have reason to rely, to take the oversight of this flock, and to direct you into those paths of truth and safety, which lead through life, through the vale of death, and to immortal joys.

Receive him, my friends, as a rich present from your *ascended Lord*; and treat him accordingly.— You are not to expect in him, perfection. You have

have *this treaſure in an earthen veſſel*; he is ſubject *to like paſſions* with yourſelves. Treat him, therefore, with candour, with affection, and in the exerciſe of that charity which *hopeth all things*. And when you approach the throne of grace, let him have a place in your minds, that through your prayers he may receive bleſſings from above.

As you would hope for the ſmiles of Heaven, cultivate peace and friendſhip among yourſelves. Conſult the general good, and ever be ready, in ſmaller matters, to agree to differ.

Guard againſt incendiaries, eſpecially ſuch as are veiling themſelves with pretences of their being of ſome particular party in religion. They in general are the greateſt banes in ſociety.——Study therefore thoſe things which make for peace, and the God of peace will be with you.

May the bleſſings of Heaven deſcend, and reſt upon you, and your Paſtor; animating you to the moſt laudable purſuits, that you may rapidly progreſs toward perfection here, and be prepared for thoſe regions of glory, where there is increaſing, ceaſeleſs light and joy, and where, ſhaded by the tree of life, flow rivers of perpetual pleaſure.